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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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Belgrade and Prague Discuss Possibility of Guest-worker Deal

On 10 October, Belgrade Tanjug announced that Yugoslav Deputy Minister of Labor Josip Franic was in Prague with a team of experts negotiating a possible arrangement that would allow 100,000 Yugoslav workers to find employment in Czechoslovakia. There is a manpower shortage in some Czechoslovak industries--particularly the building trades--which could be partially filled by such massive guest worker influx. At the

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present time, several Yugoslav construction companies have contracts in Czechoslovakia and one hitch in the guest-worker talks will be arranging assurances that freelancing individual Yugoslavs do not undercut Yugoslav companies in the Czechoslovak construction market. Another problem being studied is Prague's reluctance to return workers' remittances to Yugoslavia in hard currency at the exchange rate demanded by Belgrade.

From Belgrade's point of view, finding a new consumer for excess Yugoslav labor is vitally important. The economic downturn in West Germany last year, although fairly minor, posed the prospect of a sizeable number of the estimated 800,000 Yugoslav guest-workers returning home looking for unavailable jobs. Furthermore, the loss of hard currency remittances from these workers would seriously upset Belgrade's balance of payments situation.

Another consideration in seeking new outlets for excess labor is Belgrade's conviction that Western countries permit anti-Titoist emigres free reign in badgering guest-workers with hostile propaganda and extortion. The Yugoslavs can also be expected to suspect that Czechoslovak and Soviet intelligence would try to develop resources among Yugoslav workers in Czechoslovakia. For the present, however, Belgrade probably views such dangers with less alarm than the demonstrated ability of emigres to enlist new recruits from Yugoslav guest-workers in Sweden and West Germany.

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Yugoslav and Soviet Experts to Debate Ideological Themes

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The Marxist-Leninist Institute from Moscow and the Belgrade Institute for the International Workers Movement and Center for Socialist Research are scheduled to hold debates in Belgrade on 30-31 October. Topics slated to be discussed include "The Leninist principles of the party as practised in the USSR, The League of Communists of Yugoslavia in self-governed socialism, and Lenin's principles of the avant-garde and contemporaneity."

It is difficult to imagine the reasons why the two sides have thrown open the doors to inevitable clashes over doctrinal differences. The bilateral scene since Brezhnev's visit to Belgrade last year has been marked by successful

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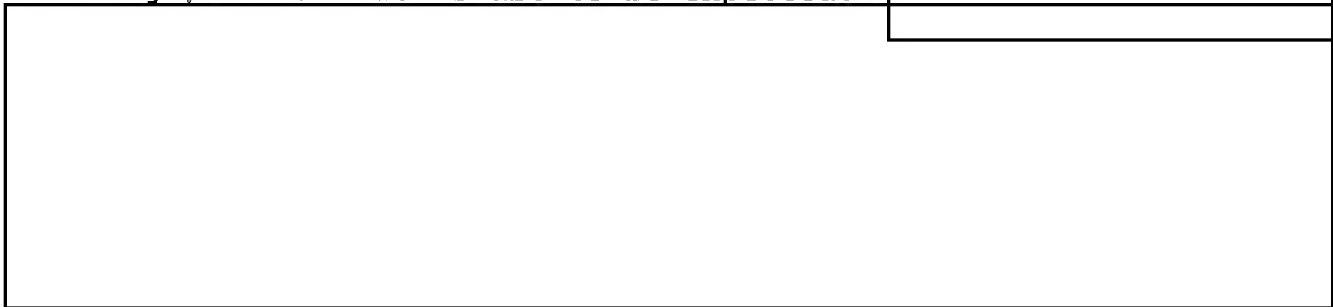
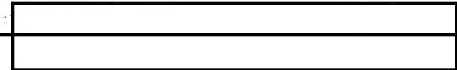
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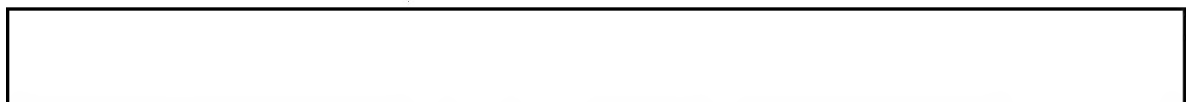
pragmatic exchanges uncluttered by ideological wrangling.
This session, however, billed as a "round table debate,"
does not seem to be shaping up as a simple information
exchange, and fireworks are to be expected.

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